



A PLAN FOR...

MOUNTAIN BIKING ON
CITY RESERVOIR WATERSHED
PROPERTY

PREPARED BY: THE MOUNTAIN
BIKING TASK FORCE

JANUARY, 1998

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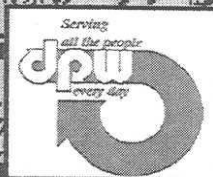


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INTRODUCTION

In November, 1995, Public Works Staff completed the first comprehensive review of the Department's Reservoir Watershed Regulations since 1981. Department Staff recommended several updates and new prohibitions. In an attempt to obtain public input before a final decision was made on the recommendations, the Director of Public Works held a Public Hearing on March 7, 1996. The Public Hearing was well attended by the cycling community which was strictly opposed to the proposed prohibition of Mountain Biking on City Watershed Woods Roads. Representatives of the cycling community expressed the belief that if the City accepted their offer of volunteer resources for both education outreach and woods roads maintenance, the City could provide a very valuable recreational opportunity to the citizens in the metropolitan area and protect the reservoir buffer lands and water quality at the same time.

In response to the comments received during the Public Hearing, the Director of Public Works set up a Mountain Biking Task Force for the purpose of developing a plan that would provide for Mountain Biking Activities and the protection of the reservoir buffer lands.

The members of the Mountain Biking Task Force are as follows:

Ms. Ann M. Lembo	Maryland Association of Mountain Bike Operators (MAMBO)
Mr. John E. Druffel	Lateral Stress Velo
Mr. Michael Foreman	Mountain Biker (unaffiliated)
Ms. Penny Troutner	Light Street Cycles
Mr. Richard Crouse	Friends of the Watersheds Committee
Ms. Josephine Owen	Friends of the Watersheds Committee
Mr. Charles Conklin	Friends of the Watersheds Committee
Mr. Robert Marsili	Department of Public Works
Mr. Eugene J. Scarpulla	Department of Public Works
Mr. Ralph O. Cullison, III	Department of Public Works

Alternates that took part in one or more meetings are as follows:

Mr. David Tambeaux	Maryland Association of Mountain Bike Operators
Mr. Charlie Thomas	Lateral Stress Velo

The Task Force first met on July 10, 1996 and immediately determined that the main issues addressed by the plan would be education, enforcement and maintenance. The three major issues will require effort from both the cycling community and the Department of Public Works. The cycling community will provide education outreach, self policing (through woods roads patrols) and volunteer maintenance projects. The City will provide materials including maps, copies of Watershed Regulations and Signage. The volunteer enforcement and maintenance efforts will be augmented by City Forces.

INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

The plan represents the beginning of a partnership between the Department of Public Works and the Mountain Biking Community. This report lays the foundation on which a more comprehensive biking plan will be developed in the coming months as the Department and mountain bikers through trial and error add to and improve the basic structure of the plan.

THE PLAN

I. Goals and Objectives

The two primary purposes of this Plan are:

- to environmentally restore/improve woods roads and other areas in the watershed to a level of acceptability as established by the Department of Public Works for the purpose of insuring water quality; and
- to continue to allow recreational use of approved woods roads.

During the implementation of this Plan, the need for additional user regulations covering mountain biking will be identified by the Mountain Biking Task Force. The additional regulations will be reviewed and commented on by the Friends of the Watersheds Committee and approved by the Director of Public Works.

II. Limits of Activity

The Task Force Members, after considerable initial discussion, came to the conclusion that a starting point would have to be defined from which all activities would be expanded and the education, maintenance and enforcement efforts would develop. The Task Force members propose that Mountain Biking Activities be based on identification of Woods Roads Biking Routes at each reservoir on which mountain biking activities will be allowed. Because of the time necessary to identify and approve the woods roads biking routes, the Task Force started with the Loch Raven Reservoir and proposes moving onto Prettyboy and Liberty Reservoirs as progress is made. Preliminarily, Woods Roads Bike Routes have been identified for the Loch Raven, Liberty and Prettyboy Reservoirs. The routes include several woods roads segments which are in the process of being field verified for mountain biking activities.

Initially, the general guideline for planning biking activities at the three reservoir watersheds will be staying off woods roads for 48 hours after a soaking rain. Criteria for temporary trail closings will be developed by the maintenance coordinators.

THE PLAN (CONTINUED)

Although this plan calls for limiting biking activity to the approved Woods Roads Bike Routes, the available areas for biking can be expanded or reduced as needed in response to the success of the overall plan.

III. Signage

Task Force Members consider proper Woods Roads Signage a priority for proper control of mountain biking activities. The absence of signage has resulted in considerable wandering and trailblazing in the past. The proper marking of woods roads will help not only with education but also in enforcement efforts. Woods roads open to mountain biking will be clearly marked at woods roads entrances and all illegal side trails and off limits woods roads will be properly marked.

Maintenance coordinators were identified that represent both the biking public and the Transportation Maintenance Division. It will be the responsibility of the Maintenance Coordinators to propose signage for review and comment by the Friends of the Watersheds Committee and approval by the Director of Public Works.

EDUCATION

The Task Force has discussed various ideas for improving awareness of the issues affecting cyclists and the watershed buffer lands. Our proposal takes a multifaceted approach to educating cyclists and improving the level of responsible environmentally sound cycling in the watershed. We believe that a continuing education program will lead to a well informed community which will provide benefits to cyclists, other trail users and ultimately the stewardship of the watershed. The Task Force arrived at this approach after concluding that most of the problems associated with off-road cycling in the reservoir woodlands identified by the Department of Public Works, result from a lack of understanding of the impact of certain behaviors and a concomitant lack of public knowledge of the standards and policies of the Department of Public Works with regard to the watershed. The goal of the plan is to educate cyclists regarding appropriate and environmentally sound riding practices within the watershed woodlands and the potential consequences of irresponsible cyclist behavior.

The plan makes use of various sources and methods of disseminating information so that the cycling community has multiple opportunities to receive the necessary information. This portion of the plan is intended to have the greatest amount of impact because it will be coming directly from leaders in the cycling community, communicating both directly and indirectly to rank and file cyclists on a regular basis. In addition to educating cyclists in sound riding practices and how they dovetail with watershed management practices, cyclists will be asked to do their part, through volunteer efforts, requiring some physical labor in regular trail maintenance and clean-up programs.

EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

The education portion of the plan can be outlined generally as follows:

I. Point of Sale Education Initiative:

The leaders of the Task Force will work in conjunction with Cycling Shop Owners to create an education and awareness program to be initiated at point of sale (i.e. in the store). Such a program will entail educating riders in soft cycling techniques, the International Mountain Bicycle Association's "Rules of the Trail," appropriate cycling techniques in the watershed buffer lands and information on how to become active in the cycling community. Cycling Shops will offer information with regard to other important cycling issues like helmets and safety, the need to control speed and the kinds of tools necessary to be "self-sufficient" on the trail. In addition, Cycling Shops will provide information on places to ride such as the North Central Railroad Trail, Baltimore and Annapolis Railroad Trail, Loch Raven Reservoir, Prettyboy Reservoir, Liberty Reservoir, Patapsco Valley State Park, Gambrill State Park, City of Frederick Watershed, Seneca Creek State Park, Rocks State Park and Susquehanna State Park to name but a few within driving distance of Baltimore.

Furthermore, Cycling Shops will emphasize that there are strict guidelines and restrictions covering riding on all City-owned watershed properties and will provide riders with the rules. The point of sale initiative will also include a Public Relations Campaign reminding cyclists to refrain from riding wet woods roads and informing them on how to find out if the woods roads in the watershed buffer lands have been temporarily closed due to wet conditions.

II. Point of Access and Trailside Education and Information Initiatives:

This education and awareness activity will include regular Cycling Awareness Information Days in tents located in the parking areas near the trail heads (i.e. near the intersection of Dulaney Valley Road and Seminary Avenue). The leaders of the cycling community will pass out information with regard to soft cycling in the watershed lands which will include International Mountain Bike Association's "Rules of the Trail", proper riding techniques and etiquette, education on the nature and sensitivity of watershed buffer lands, open and legal trails and awareness of the need to curtail riding activity on trails when they are overly wet. Loch Raven will be the initial focus and these information days will occur about once per month. These same efforts will be used to expand the focus to Liberty and Prettyboy Reservoirs in the future.

Information Kiosks/Bulletin Boards will be provided at each woods road loop entrance. The bulletin boards will include maps of approved open woods roads, rules of conduct and public notices. In addition, a method for indicating the temporary closure of woods roads due to weather conditions will involve the kiosks or special signage at the entrance to the woods roads.

EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

The placement of signage indicating trail closures will be performed by Department Staff as well as biking volunteers. In addition, the telephone message capabilities of the City's Reservoir Natural Resources Office, area Bike Shops and metropolitan biking clubs will be utilized to inform the public of temporary trail closings.

III. Reservoir Slide Presentation

The Reservoir Natural Resources Office will develop a Slide Presentation covering the history and purpose of Baltimore's Reservoir System and the rules governing the use of the reservoir buffer lands. In addition, the presentation will include information on the environmental impacts that affect water quality and the ways that the biking community can help protect the quality of the metropolitan area's raw water supply.

Upon request, the Slide Presentation will be presented to area biking groups during their regular meetings.

IV. Other Methods of Disseminating Education Materials

In addition to the methods and media mentioned above, the Cycling Club Newsletters will be used to spread information with regard to cycling dos and don'ts, soft cycling, trail etiquette, trail use and misuse and alternative trail systems within easy reach of Baltimore. The plan is to pass the word via clubs like Maryland Association Of Mountain Bike Operators (MAMBO), Lateral Stress Velo, Baltimore Bicycling Club and others in their regular newsletters. These organizations have over 3,000 members combined and have far reaching impact in the Baltimore Metro Cycling Community.

V. Cycling Patrols

As an additional measure in the education program, a Volunteer Cycling Patrol will be implemented to act in an oversight capacity.

All local bicycling groups will be asked to provide volunteers for patrolling and monitoring approved riding areas.

Duties. The duties of those assigned to perform bike patrols would include the following:

Education. The most important aspect of the bike patrols would be the face to face communication and interaction with other riders. Bicycling organizations will be responsible for training patrol members. Patrol members will provide information about

EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

Watershed Regulations, Rules of the Trail, and approved riding areas as well as providing educational materials to riders.

Monitoring the condition of the trails. Patrol members, as they ride the trails, will watch for wet conditions, areas needing trail maintenance and other problems such as downed trees. Patrol members will notify watershed maintenance personnel about problems such as downed trees so that riding trails will not be re-routed around them. Patrol members will also notify the appropriate people if the trail conditions are such that the trail should be closed temporarily. Patrol members can also be the eyes and ears of watershed management and notify them about any illegal activity that is observed (for instance, hunting, motorized vehicles, etc.).

Signage. Patrol members will also check the condition of any signage.

Trash cleanup. As they are patrolling, cyclists will also pick up trash that is on or along the woods roads and approved trails.

Schedule.

The use of bike patrols will develop over time. All local cycling clubs will work together to provide volunteers for the patrols. The organization structure will be a committee that will be responsible for scheduling bike patrols, with one person designated as the contact person with City personnel.

A starting schedule of one evening during the week (3 hours) and one full day every weekend from 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, alternating Saturdays and Sundays is proposed. As the group of volunteers expands, coverage will increase especially during the peak riding season. The long range plan is to provide coverage several evenings during the week and both days on the weekends (conditions permitting) during the peak riding season. Patrol coverage will be provided during the off-season, November through March, on weekends, and if necessary in the evening during the week.

Report.

Bike patrol members will be provided with a checklist to use when patrolling that will be used to report on their patrol and will also be used to notify City personnel of any problems.

ENFORCEMENT

A rigorous enforcement program will be necessary for the overall success of the Mountain Biking Plan. The Task Force Members believe the multifaceted Education Outreach Program will go a

ENFORCEMENT (CONTINUED)

long way to correct the improper activities of the past. However, it is anticipated that there will be a few members of the cycling community that may choose not to heed the limits placed on mountain biking activities. In the past, because of limited enforcement, mountain biking activities moved from the woods roads into the woodlands and wetlands of the buffer lands. The City will need to react swiftly to blatant violations of the Watershed Regulations in order to avoid the few rogue bikers from influencing others to leave the approved woods roads and to venture into the buffer lands.

A grace period will be provided for one year following the date of the Director's approval of the Plan. This will enable the education outreach activities to reach and inform the cycling community on the necessity to conform to the Watershed Regulations. During the grace period, Public Works Watershed Police and Watershed Employees will warn violators concerning their actions in an effort to support the education outreach of the mountain biking groups. However, the Watershed Police will be free to use their judgment and take the necessary actions should the infractions represent blatant disregard for public safety and/or the integrity of the buffer lands.

The biking patrols formed by the mountain biking community will serve not only in an education capacity but also will help Watershed Police by communicating instances of noncompliance with Watershed Regulations.

VOLUNTEER MAINTENANCE

The Task Force Members realize that a high level of volunteerism is necessary to maintain the woods roads and the woodland areas that have been damaged in the past. The Mountain Biking Organizations will work hard to maximize the availability of volunteer labor and will provide materials and technical expertise when possible.

The Mountain Biking Organizations and the Department's Transportation Maintenance Division identified maintenance coordinators that will jointly review candidate maintenance projects and determine the best means of providing corrective measures. The maintenance projects will be submitted to the Environmental Services Division of the Bureau of Water and Wastewater and the Transportation Maintenance Division of the Bureau of Transportation for review. Final approval will be provided by the Director of Public Works or his designated representative. Following approval, maintenance activities will then be scheduled to meet the availability of volunteer workers and City Work Forces.

This plan calls for monthly maintenance weekends with the goal of at least two sites per maintenance day. The Task Force recommends that maintenance efforts be reviewed in 12 months and annually thereafter to determine if the efforts are meeting woods roads restoration standards. If maintenance efforts prove to meet the demand, then additional areas will be considered for

VOLUNTEER MAINTENANCE (CONTINUED)

mountain biking. If maintenance efforts fall short of expectations, then the Task Force will consider ways of increasing maintenance activities and/or limiting access to specific woods roads.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

This report, as indicated earlier, is an outline of activities that will be undertaken to develop mountain biking activities on the City Reservoir buffer lands. Following approval by the Director of Public Works, Department Staff and representatives of the cycling community will initiate the education, maintenance and enforcement activities of the Plan in accordance with the following timeline.

Timeline for Implementing the Mountain Biking Plan

1. August 28, 1996
Submittal of draft Mountain Biking Plan to the Friends of the Watersheds Committee.
2. September 25, 1996
Submittal of sample signage to the Friends of the Watersheds Committee for review and comment.
3. September 30, 1996
Submittal of Mountain Biking Plan with recommendations from the Friends of the Watersheds Committee to the Director of Public Works for approval.
4. Within one month of the Director's approval of the Mountain Biking Plan and Revised Reservoir Watershed Regulations
- Implement Education Activities and Monthly Maintenance Projects.
5. Within two months of the Director's approval of the Mountain Biking Plan and Revised Reservoir Watershed Regulations
- Begin placement of Signage and Biking Patrols.
6. One year following the Director's approval of the Mountain Biking Plan and Revised Reservoir Watershed Regulations
- Enforcement Grace Period ends.

The above schedule is an approximate time-frame for implementing the various aspects of the Mountain Biking Plan. The implementation dates may vary somewhat because of weather conditions and the availability of City and biker resources. During this period of time, the

FUTURE ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Mountain Biking Task Force will continue to meet at least on a monthly basis. After the Enforcement Grace Period ends, the Task Force will disband and the review of mountain biking activities will be conducted by the Friends of the Watersheds Committee on a quarterly basis or as issues are raised by either City Staff or the Mountain Biking Community.

MEASURING PLAN SUCCESS

Following the end of the Enforcement Grace Period, the Friends of the Watersheds Committee will review mountain biking activities on at least an annual basis. The criteria utilized to determine the success of the Plan will include the following:

1. Are mountain bikers restricting their activities to the designated biking routes?
2. Has the cycling community provided the volunteers necessary to meet the needs for education outreach, cycling patrols and maintenance?
3. Regarding the condition of the woods roads, are they improving, holding their own or showing signs of degradation?

As indicated earlier in the report, results of the annual review of mountain biking activities will be used when considering the need to further restrict this activity or in the case of successful Plan implementation the possibility of opening additional biking routes.

APPROVED:



**GEORGE G. BALOG
DIRECTOR**

DATE: 1/30/98

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

THE RESERVOIR NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE

410-795-6151

Liberty Reservoir Watershed

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Mountain Bicycle Route

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Watershed Property

Utility Right-of-Way

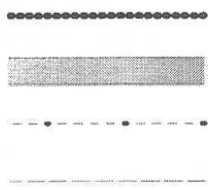
Stream or Shoreline

prepared by The City of Baltimore Department of Public Works
BaseMap by The Baltimore Metropolitan Council

April, 1997



Loch Raven Reservoir Watershed



Mountain Bicycle Route

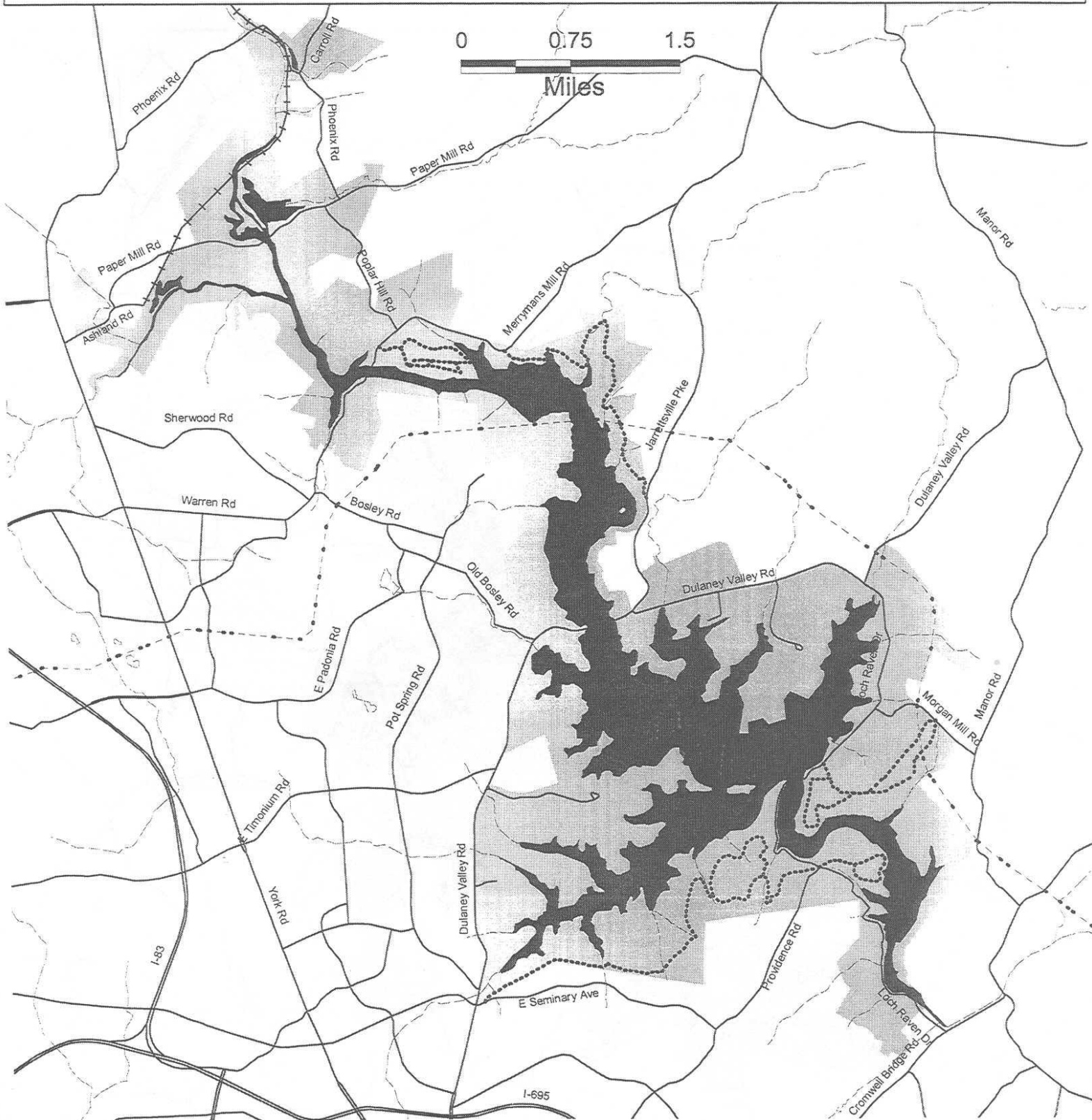
Watershed Property

Utility Right-of-Way

Stream or Shoreline

prepared by The City of Baltimore Department of Public Works
BaseMap by The Baltimore Metropolitan Council

April, 1997



Prettyboy Reservoir Watershed



Mountain Bicycle Route



Watershed Property



Utility Right-of-Way



Stream or Shoreline

prepared by The City of Baltimore Department of Public Works
BaseMap by The Baltimore Metropolitan Council

April, 1997

MD-PA State Boundary

